

622 tahsildar (district official and judge) in Leh; he had the duty of calling  
651 up the farmers for forced labor (the building of roads and bridges, transport service with horses and carriers, and the like) which the government decreed; and he was also responsible for peace and order in the village. This position caused the father much exertion and worry as well as a lot of annoyance whenever the farmers did not want to obey his orders or did not pay the taxes. In bad cases, the policeman who traveled around the district would have to enforce the orders with a whip, and he did so extensively except when someone pressed a coin into his hand which ordinarily put him immediately into a very indulgent mood.

871 With these prospects Namgyal now set about school learning. Two to three times a week he went with a few comrades to the Lama Dondrub who belonged to the large monastery Lamayuru in the neighboring village, and who inhabited a small hermitage here in Kalatse at the edge of the village. He came from the Break-leg house and was, like his brother, sly, cunning, quarrelsome and used his position as village priest to plague and impoverish his fellow villagers and "penitents." Keeping school /50/ was entrusted to him because there was no one else to be had for the job. In winter, when all field work was at a standstill, he instructed the youths desirous of learning--only boys, never girls--who were never very numerous. As compensation for his efforts the father of one of his pupils would now and then give him a sack of barley or a piece of butter, but this did not happen too often. Yet he knew how to look out for himself. Education was still on a very low level in the country. Lama Dondrub now endeavored to initiate his pupils into the mysteries of Tibetan script. On sunny winter days he would sit with the studious boys on the flat roof of a house, each one a sheet of rough Tibetan paper in his hand on which the Lama had written Tibetan letters and words. With a loud, rasping voice he would read out: "ka, kha, ga, nga," the first letters of the alphabet, and the chorus answered in the same tone of voice, the little alphabetarians rocking their bodies back and forth exactly the way their teacher did. When the 30 letters of the alphabet were firmly implanted in their heads and could be rattled off, he started them on the reading and spelling of simple words. It was a laborious, slow undertaking, a mechanical and dull repeating and mimicking, and yet they had progressed so far by the end of the winter that they could read short sentences. The main difficulty was presented by the many prefixes and suffixes, letters placed in front of the words and syllables,

876

which have by now mostly become mute and with which they did not know what to do. Hand in hand with the reading went the writing. They wrote on small wooden tablets covered with black lacquer with wide reed pens and white, sticky clay. In the course of three winters Dondrub had brought his pupils to the point that they were able to read and write simple things fairly fluently in the printed and in the written script. Aside from reading and writing, the lama also taught the boys a little arithmetic, but in so doing he did not go beyond the numerical cycle of 100; his own knowledge did not extend beyond that. The rosary with its 108 beads had to serve in this--as it also does otherwise in monetary transactions between Tibetans--as a counting machine.

876●

[802]

Lama Dondrub did not plague either himself or his students with any other branches of knowledge. Old Konchog Trashig told them the old legends and fairytales /51/; from him the boys also heard how the ancient, once mighty West Tibetan Kingdom of Ladakh came to an end when the Dogras from northwestern India (Jammu) invaded the country and vanquished the poorly armed and poorly led but valiant men of Ladakh after a six-year battle, deposed the king, and assumed rule. Now they also understood why in the capital of Leh there dominated and ruled a Wasir who did not belong to their people but who was an Indian; they understood why their district was administered by an Indian district official and judge and why in the fortresses in Leh, in Kalatse, and in Kargil there were Indian soldiers stationed who were sent now here and now there in order to maintain peace and order and to remind recalcitrant taxpayers and forced laborers of their duty by forcible means.

631

Not overburdened with book learning Namgyal thus entered life. The little he had learned nevertheless elevated him above the majority of his compatriots who had not attended school and who mostly had no desire to do so. "We are stupid as oxen," neighbor Sherab used to say, despite his proud name which means "wisdom." "Our fathers were unable to read or write, why should we bother with it? We have more important things to do with our fields and with our cattle. A farmer has no time to acquire book learning; that is a matter for the lamas."

871

Even if Namgyal's book learning did not go very far, he nevertheless developed into an industrious Tibetan farmer under the tutelage and instigation of his father and of his uncle Stobsldan, a brother of his father's. He soon knew how to handle horses, donkeys, cows, sheep and goats; he knew how to lead the plow skillfully through the stony field and how to water the field and the garden properly; he was able to

868

*Beyond the High Himalayas*

87/ lighted and full of scheming devils, learns about the paintings  
 532 from the lamas. He first learns of devils and demons from the lips  
 869 of his parents when he is a babe, from the stories his elders tell  
 as he grows up, from the legends of pass poison, evil demons, re-  
 vengeful gods that men in the caravans relate. And when he goes  
 to the monasteries, the stories he has heard at home are con-  
 firmed. The lamas put on their dances and out come Lust, Anger,  
 and Greed in person. Even the most stupid person can see them  
 in all their ugliness. Thus are the natives indoctrinated with fears  
 and superstitions. The devils are always present; they are a factor  
 never forgotten in the daily life of the Ladakhis. A Ladakhi burns  
 incense to sanctify his house. He spins his prayer wheel and ob-  
 serves the ritual of the *mani* walls and *chhortens*. And to gain re-  
 ligious merit, he goes on a pilgrimage, sometimes to India proper,  
 in search of the river of mystery in the fashion of the lama im-  
 mortalized by Kipling's *Kim*.

- 792 Rahul, devout Buddhist and a prominent layman in the church,  
 • 876 made a speech a year or so ago saying the monasteries should be-  
 come educational centers, bringing in the children from the sur-  
 rounding areas and teaching them. The wrath of the lamas de-  
 scended on Rahul. He was severely taken to task.

"Why?" I ventured to ask.

"Because the power of the lamas is in part due to the ignorance  
 of the people," Rahul answered. "That is the reason why Tibet  
 has been the forbidden land. The lamas do not want ideas from  
 the outside world to reach their people. Ideas, you know, can be  
 disturbing."

That is why travel of foreigners throughout the whole area was  
 long restricted. That is why lamas, fearful of the importation of  
 ideas, would sometimes turn bandits loose on travelers. That is  
 why, even today, the educational activities of monasteries—apart  
 from their perpetuation of superstition—are practically nil.

- 792 Lamaism has a vested interest not only in the ignorance of the  
 people but in their poverty as well. Poverty and ignorance, in

imposed himself. He did not do so with any severity, however, as parents are usually "afraid of their children", fearing that if they are too strict, they will not be well treated by them later, when they themselves have to go into the *k'hang-gu*. 595  
855

I enquired who it was who gave the children their sex education. 864  
The answer was that nobody did. Parents are forbidden by custom to speak to them of such things, and they have to pick up what they can learn from playmates. Another source of information was watching animals, it seemed, and everyone agreed that they *may* learn something from witnessing their parents' behaviour during the long winter nights in the *Jan-sa*. Anyhow, they "somehow" knew about sex by the time they were approximately six years of age.

Sexual games between children, as well as masturbation, were very severely punished if discovered by the parents. The father would beat a child caught playing with itself or attempting coitus with another child. Mothers, it seemed, did not beat, but pinched instead, and this could be made very unpleasant for the victim. It was impressed upon me that if a child was a favourite, it might be dealt with more leniently, and that no attempt to deal out punishment equally was made. [861]  
[858]

In very small children, masturbation was repressed by attempts to frighten the child. It would be told by its mother that a sort of witch called a *baghzi* (a Hindu name?) would come and either carry the child away, or cut off its ears and put them in a leather bag which the creature carried expressly for the purpose of collecting the ears of bad children. No threat was ever made that the genital organs of the child would be cut off, and the idea that this might be said seemed utterly fantastic to my informants. As a sign of the times, I heard that children were also threatened with being carried off by Tungan robbers (these were Chinese Moslems from Sinkiang who, in 1938, had just been chased out of Turkestan by Soviet troops, and had escaped Southwards, over the Karakorum pass; they stayed in Leh for some time before being repatriated by sea to China by the Government of India). 864  
861  
[854]

When children were between six and seven years old, their formal education began. They were taught to read and write Tibetan by qualified teachers, usually lamas, for about one year. Most of the teaching consisted in getting the pupil to learn long texts by heart and reciting them, in the very early morning. Corporal punishment was administered if the lesson was not learned properly. When the year was up, more practical things were taught, such as agriculture and the traditional ways in which crops are grown in Ladak. Pastoral duties were also inculcated into future herdsmen at this time, while others learned a trade. [563]  
872  
[876]  
[868]

culcated into future herdsmen at this time, while others learned a trade.

892 Those children who were put in monasteries, either boys or girls,  
792 were usually sent there at the respective ages of eight and fourteen. The boys became lamas and were put through a very severe period of probation. They were attached to a master whom they had to serve completely, as if they were his body-servant. Frequent corporal punishment was meted out to them and this was quite usual - in fact it was a perfectly correct thing to do, and many jokes had to do with the way in which a master gave his pupil a correction with a whip, on the slightest pretext, when he felt that he had not been attentive to his merest whim. In nunneries, very much the same happened, except that relations between elders and probationers were not so acute. A girl was usually trained by a *jetsün-ma* (*rJe-bTsun-ma*), or senior nun, before becoming a *cho-mo* (*Jo-mo*) or ordinary nun, and the relation between the two women was of a much less brutal nature.

595 (iii) *Reasons given for the existence of polyandry in Ladak*

428 The consensus of opinion among the informants in the various polyandrous households that I visited about why they followed this particular type of matrimonial custom, was that it was the only way to avoid dividing up the property and thus being impoverished in a bleak and arid land. I was also told, as a secondary reason, that it enabled a household to obtain the sufficient labour that it needed to cultivate the fields; where many brothers inherited the property jointly, and took one wife in common, they could easily cope with the work to be done, as there were enough hands to do it.

595 Only once did I hear that there might be yet another reason beyond these for which polyandry was followed by the Buddhist Ladakis of Tibetan affinity. It was on the 30th September 1938, near Ridzong, when we met a bandit from Tibet proper, called Norgyäs. He told me that polyandry was practised by Tibetans so as to avoid the wives of the brothers quarrelling. Peace in the house, according to him, could only be obtained if there was only one wife in the family.

595 The Reverend Walter Asboe was of the opinion that it was a blessing  
114 that polyandry existed among the Buddhists. In so poor and difficult an environment, he said, another matrimonial system would probably only lead either to strife over the obtention of food, or to widespread famine. In this, he was only echoing what previous Moravian missionaries as well as many authors have said when speaking or writing about the customs of the people in Ladak.